

Remarks

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks and discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-20 are currently pending in the application; Claims 1-16 having been amended, and new Claims 17-20 having been added, by way of the present response.

Applicants respectfully assert that support for the changes to the claims is self-evident from the originally filed disclosure, including the original claims, and that therefore no new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action Claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,629,284 to Malavieille. Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of the claims has been overcome for the following reasons.

The present invention is directed to a method for coupling plastic optical fibers, as well as coupling units. Independent Claim 1 recites the method including providing a holder having a groove configured to hold the plastic optical fibers in a longitudinal direction. Opposed end faces of the plastic optical fibers are abutted together. A first portion of a clip is removably disposed on a face of the holder and a second portion of the clip is removably disposed on a face of a cover to apply a lateral pressure to the plastic optical fibers therebetween to sandwich the plastic optical fibers. Independent Claim 9 recites a holder having a groove configured to hold plastic optical fibers in a longitudinal direction. A clip includes first and second portions, the clip configured to be removably disposed to contact a face of a cover with the first portion and a face of the holder with the second portion to apply a lateral pressure to the plastic optical fibers therebetween to sandwich the plastic optical fibers.

Malavieille is directed to a method and apparatus for connecting optical fibers. As shown in Figure 22, for example, of Malavieille, a plate 8 bears down on first and second

optical fibers 1 and 2 in a groove 5 of a support 4. A cover 215 is pivoted to press elastomeric blocks 217 and 218 to hold a protective sleeve 210 through which the optical fiber 1 is passed.¹

With regard to independent Claim 1, Applicants respectfully assert that Malavieille does not teach or suggest, however, the claimed features of removably disposing a first portion of a clip on a face of a holder and a second portion of the clip on a face of a cover to apply a lateral pressure to plastic optical fibers therebetween to sandwich the plastic optical fibers. Specifically, Applicants respectfully assert that Malavieille does not show or state removably disposing a clip on the plate 8 and the support 4, for example.

In particular, independent Claim 1 recites “removably disposing a first portion of a clip on a face of the holder and a second portion of the clip on a face of a cover to apply a lateral pressure to the plastic optical fibers therebetween to sandwich the plastic optical fibers.” Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn and the independent claim allowed.

With regard to independent Claim 9, Applicants respectfully assert that Malavieille does not teach or suggest, however, the claimed features of a clip including first and second portions, the clip configured to be removably disposed to contact a face of a cover with the first portion and a face of a holder with the second portion to apply a lateral pressure to plastic optical fibers therebetween to sandwich the plastic optical fibers. Specifically, Applicants respectfully assert that Malavieille does not show or state a clip configured to be removably disposed to contact the plate 8 and to contact the support 4, for example.

In particular, independent Claim 9 recites “a clip including first and second portions, the clip configured to be removably disposed to contact a face of a cover with the first portion and a face of the holder with the second portion to apply a lateral pressure to the plastic

¹ From Column 11, line 61 to Column 12, line 15.

optical fibers therebetween to sandwich the plastic optical fibers." Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent Claim 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn and the independent claim allowed.

Applicants respectfully assert that dependent Claims 2-8 and 10-16 are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend, as well as for their own features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of dependent Claims 2-8 and 10-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn and the dependent claims allowed.

Applicants respectfully assert that new Claims 17-20 recite features that are not taught or suggested by the references of record. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of new Claims 17-20.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-20 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

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